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SUBJECT: TAGLIAVINI'S LAST UNSC APPEARANCE ON ABKHAZIA:
BURJANADZE MAKES POWERFUL REBUKE OF RUSSIA

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN R. BOLTON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) Summary: Speaking before the Security Council in a private meeting about the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) on July 11, Georgian Parliament President Nino Burjanadze delivered a powerful political rebuke of the policies of the Russian Federation on practically every level. Burjanadze stated that the "original purpose for the CIS peacekeepers had been the necessity of a cease-fire, but that had been achieved 14 years ago and since then all that had been witnessed were murders, kidnapping and violations of human rights." She charged that Russian citizenship had been given to Abkhaz "purposefully, just to clarify the permanent military presence of Russian forces in the region." Continuing, Burjanadze stated that under the current peacekeeping format the Abkhaz separatist government was being steadily armed and that nine percent of all crimes in Abkhazia were being perpetrated by the peacekeepers themselves. Burjanadze also said recent statements by Putin and the Russian foreign ministry implying a linkage between Kosovo and Abkhazia were merely "an attempt to find a legal justification for the ongoing de-facto annexation undermining the sovereignty of Georgia." Russian Permanent Representative, Vitaly Churkin, exercising his right to reply, said there was little he could do other than to "throw up his hands after such a speech". Churkin quoted Georgian President Sakaashvili as having said after his June 13 meeting with President Putin in St. Petersburg that "historically problems in the Caucasus have only been solved when Georgia stands with Russia." Churkin said that Sakaashvili's declaration had made Russia hopeful, but that Burjanadze's blatant and ill-considered statement before the Security Council now called this into question. Churkin underscored that Russia was "not a party to the conflict" and averred that Burjanadze's statement could give "the false impression that there was no problem between Sukhumi and Tblisi and that Russia alone was the problem."

12. (C) The UNSC private meeting was followed by closed consultations of only the Security Council where SRSG Heidi Tagliavini reviewed her achievements as SRSG. Tagliavini said that much work lay ahead, but that UNOMIG had made significant progress under her tenure traveling from a period four years ago when the peace process was at a complete standstill and there was a high level of tension in the zone of conflict. Council members then made national statements. End summary.

Burjanadze Makes Strong Speech In UNSC Private Meeting

13. (C) Speaking before the Security Council in a private meeting on UNOMIG on July 11, Georgian Parliament President Nino Burjanadze delivered from start to finish a strong political rebuke of the policies of the Russian Federation on

practically every level. Burjanadze stated that Georgia had come a long way since the Rose Revolution to build democratic institutions, but that some problems it faced required more than political will; these were problems related to its very political integrity. Georgia faced political refugees who still could not return to their homes and property and Abkhaz military exercises that had been on the rise in the past year. Burjanadze continued that the presence of the CIS peacekeepers in the zone of conflict was "a problem" and the existing peacekeeping operation was "not impartial in carrying out its mandate." The original purpose for the CIS peacekeepers had been the necessity of a cease-fire, but "that had been achieved 14 years ago and since then all we had been witnessing were murders, kidnapping and violations of human rights." Burjanadze explicitly called for a new peacekeeping format that would be more neutral. She also noted that Russian citizenship had been given to Abkhaz "purposefully" and just to "clarify the permanent military presence of Russian forces in the region." Burjanadze also charged that under the current peacekeeping format the separatist government was being steadily armed and that nine percent of all crimes in Abkhazia were being perpetrated by the peacekeepers themselves. She also said recent statements by Putin and the Russian foreign ministry implying a linkage between Kosovo and Abkhazia were merely an attempt to find a legal justification for the ongoing de-facto annexation undermining the sovereignty of Georgia. "In addition, Russian influence in Abkhazia is constantly on the increase and no high-level appointment is made without Russian approval," declared Burjanadze.

Russian Response to Burjanadze

14. (C) Russian Permanent Representative, Vitaly Churkin, exercising his right to reply, said there was little he could

do in response other than to "throw up his hands after such a speech." Churkin quoted Georgian President Sakaashvili as having said after his June 13 meeting with President Putin in St. Petersburg that "historically problems in the Caucasus have only been solved when Georgia stands with Russia." Churkin said that Sakaashvili's declaration had made Russia hopeful, but that Burjanadze's blatant and ill-considered statement before the Security Council called that into question. Churkin underscored that Russia was "not a party to the conflict" and averred that Burjanadze's statement could "give the false impression that there was no problem between Sukhumi and Tblisi and that Russia alone was the problem for Abkhazia."

Consultations

15. (C) In closed UNSC consultations following the private meeting, SRSG Heidi Tagliavini reviewed what she said she thought were her key achievements and delivered comments on UNOMIG and progress on key issues in Abkhazia. Tagliavini noted that when she had arrived at her post four years earlier there had been almost no dialogue between the two sides with the progress on resolving the conflict at a virtual standstill. The security situation in the zone of conflict was also fragile and tense, especially in Gali and a helicopter had been shot down in the upper Kodori Valley in 2002. She had sent a mission to Gali to assess the situation and make recommendations, some of which had been implemented and some including economic rehabilitation were still underway. Some of these steps had prevented the conflict from flaring up again and increased confidence. She had also organized and led study visits to Kosovo and Bosnia in October 2003 and later to elsewhere including the multiethnic regions of the Swiss confederation. The Geneva process had started in 2003 under DPKO U/SYG Guehenno and in 2006 the first resumed session of the Coordinating Council had met. We needed to continue along the same lines of increasing dialogue. In recent meetings the two sides had been to start discussing a road map for the conflict. Tagliavini also said she thought it would be useful if the Security Council made a visit to Georgia in the future.

¶6. (C) Tagliavini then summarized her main achievements over four years as: 1) keeping stability in a volatile environment 2) creating an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect on both sides that allowed for negotiations 3) there had been no causalities among UNOMIG mission members. Her briefing tracked largely with the contents of the latest quarterly Security Council report. Speaking one more time, at the very end of the day's Security Council session, Tagliavini characterized her four years as UNOMIG SRSG as "her most challenging and exhausting years ever," but concluded that she "would not have traded the experience for anything."

National Statements By Council Members

¶7. (C) Limiting himself to prepared comments this time, Russian Permrep Churkin commended Tagliavini for her accomplishments as SRSG. He said he shared the view on the need to complete the documents on non-use of force. Churkin also said he supported direct dialogue among the parties and the view that we ought to look at resolving any problems in the region only under existing formats. The work of the CIS peacekeepers was closely aligned with that of the UN Mission, said Churkin. He called on the Georgians to understand the complexity of the peacekeepers' work and also noted that SYG Annan had recently praised their performance. Churkin stated flatly that Russia rejected any change to the format of the CIS peacekeepers operations and believed that the Georgians should provide security so patrols could be resumed in the upper Kodori Valley.

¶8. (C) Slovakia said we needed to support a lasting settlement within the context of Security Council resolutions and within the internationally-recognized borders of Georgia and that this ought to be unalterable. The UK echoed the sentiments of all present that Tagliavini had done an excellent job in her four years and also praised the recent resumption of the Coordinating Council as an important achievement. The UK also voiced support for a fact-finding mission to look at whether there was a policing gap and said the purpose should be technical and local. Speaking for the U.S., Ambassador Sanders stated that the Security Council's key goal should be maintaining the territorial integrity of Georgia. The U.S. also supported an assessment mission to Gali and Zugdidi on policing. France also expressed support for an assessment mission and said the resumption of the Coordinating Council had been an important achievement, but

urged completion of the documents soon.

Tagliavini's Meeting With the Friends

¶9. (C) The following day, Tagliavini met with the Friends of Georgia group for a more informal opportunity to discuss her assessment of her work over four years and to review the challenges that her successor would inherit. Her overall assessment tracked closely with the points she delivered the day before and were likely most beneficial to the Germans who were not in the closed consultations of the day before. However, Tagliavini said she thought the conditions were ripe to move ahead on the fact-finding mission, but that it should be done properly and she felt that practically speaking she ought to turn the fact-finding mission over to her successor. She allowed, though, that if it looked like that would delay things too much the fact-finding mission could be pushed ahead. She said perhaps by August 1, otherwise likely by September 1 it should be possible to launch the mission. She noted that the mission should be for Zugdidi as well and stated that under her tenure such missions had always looked at both sides of the zone of conflict. Russian DPR Dolgov raised no objections to the fact-finding mission other than to say it should include Zugdidi and focus only on criminality. Tagliavini also noted (as she did the day before in the Council) that she thought it would be very helpful if the Security Council made a visit to Georgia sometime soon. She said that this was a region of the world

where a Security Council visit would get real attention and
could make a real impact, including on public opinion.
BOLTON